THE Everlasting Truth EXALTED:

BEING

A plain Testimony unto the Manifestation, Growth and Prosperity of

TRUTH.

ALSO

Some Dangers opened and discovered in the not receiving Truth, or having received it, departing from it.

ALSO

A short Testimony unto Gospel Meetings and Fellowship; with a tender Invitation unto all that are afar off, to come; and unto all that are departed and gone away, to return.

William Smith.

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The Everlasting Truth Exalted, &c.

AFter the long Night of Apostacy had overspread the Earth, and the gross Darkness of it covered and remained upon the people, and that none could be found among the Sons of men to lead and deliver out of it; then did the Lord manifest himself from Heaven, and the Light began to spring as the morning, and to give light to such as sat in darkness, and under the shadow of death; and though many travelled in pain, as being sorely oppressed by the power of darkness; yet when the Lord did manifest his Light, and his Love in it, there were not many could believe that it was he, and so they received him not, though he came unto them for their good, *But to as many as received him to them he gave power to become the Sons of God, even to as many as believed in his Name, which were born, not of Flesh, nor of Blood, nor of the will of man, but of God*; and so the Love of God is manifested in sending his only begotten Son into the World, to be a Light unto the World, that all in him might believe and receive Life; but that which is born of Flesh and Blood, and of the will of man doth not believe that the Light is he whom God sendeth, and therefore receives him not in his Light, when he makes himself manifest; for that nature expecteth some higher or greater appearance of Christ then in his Light; but as *John* bare witness of Christ to be the true Light, so his appearance is not to be expected after any other manner, or in any other thing; for whatsoever is contrary to that which is true, is false, and there is but one thing true (or Truth it self) and that *John* testifies to be the Light with which Christ enlighteneth every one that comes into the World; and as the Light is true, (or Truth it self) so the expectation is to be drawn off from all other things as being false, and the mind is to turn to the Light as being only true; and though it seem as a low or little thing in its manifestation, yet there is nothing which in it self is true besides it, and therefore most worthy of all things to be loved and obeyed in the least appearance of it;

for who dispises the day of small things cannot come to the day of glory, where the Son ruleth; and here many have suffered loss as to the benefit which in the Light they might have received and enjoyed, for not loving and obeying the appearance or breaking forth of the Light in a small measure, it doth not go on in such unto a perfect day, but being despised as a small thing, or a thing of no value, it draweth into it self again the manifestation, and then none can see the way unto God, nor walk in the Path of Life, for the Light being dispised, and so withdrawing it self, there is nothing but darkness remains to be the Guide, and such as walks in darkness knows not whither they go, because darkness hath blinded their minds, and this hath been an occasion of stumbling unto many, who have not loved the Light, but despised it, for in darkness they stumble, and many times fall, but in the Light, which is the plain Path, there is no stumbling, and they that do not walk in that Path, but dispises it, and stumbles at it, they walk in the broad way, and in that way they cannot have peace, for they that despise the day of small things, they dispise that by which Peace cometh, and none can have peace whilst they despise that by which it comes; for they that would have peace with God must receive and entertain the Light, and not dispise it, and though it may appear but as a little thing, yet peace is found in the least appearance of it, as it is loved and obeyed; but the high and lofty cannot bow unto it, the birth of Flesh and Blood, and of the will of man expects some higher and greater thing; and when the Light manifests it self by reproof in the Conscience, there is not submission, but rather dispising, for the broad way is more delightfull to that birth then the narrow; and therefore it is that the broad way is filled with many walkers; and so many may see the Morning, and not come to see the perfect day; for if the Light in its manifestation be not loved and obeyed, there is not a going forward in the Truth, nor any growth and increase witnessed, and so the Light hath manifest it self in many, and they have seen the darkness by the manifestation, but not loving and obeying the Light that it might become their Teacher and Leader, they still abide in darkness, and are not redeemed and delivered, and that is the thraldom and bondage, where many yet remains who have been visited with the day-spring from on high, they do not love nor obey the Light when it springs and manifests

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it self unto them, and so they keep themselves in their own sorrow, and misery by loving and obeying darkness; for if the Light be followed in love, as being only true, there is not an abiding in darkness, but a coming to the Light of Life; and so Christ said, *I am the Light of the World, he that followeth me shall not abide in darkness*; which thing is true in him, and in all those that follow him; for in the appearance of his Light the darkness passeth away, and the power of it groweth weaker, and then comes redemption and deliverance out of Darkness unto those that love and obey the Light, and so they come out of the pollutions and defilements into that which is pure, and holy, and righteous, and these are only the people which are found to the praise and glory of God; for who have been visited, and do not obey the Lord, they are not found to his praise and glory, but are found in that by which God is dishonoured; and who have tasted of the good Word of God, and the powers of the World to come, and have seen many great and wonderfull things, and afterwards go from the Light, and lose their stedfastness, they are not found to the praise and glory of God, but dishonoureth his Name and Truth and People; for they that sometimes did own the Light to be true (or Truth it self) and for a season rejoyced in it, and as Disciples took up the Cross to follow it, and now are grown weary of walking in the narrow way, and so are gone back and follows no further, they cannot be found to the praise and glory of God, but are found to dishonour him, by departing from him, and taking liberty to satisfie the flesh, with the affections and lusts, and that is the birth of flesh and blood, and of the will of man, whatsoever may be pretended of the Birth of God, or of retaining a measure of Light and Truth to wait upon God in their own particulars; that spirit which so draweth back, and causeth any to depart from the Way of Truth, and from the holy Commandment given of God, it is a false spirit, and so an enemy to the true Spirit, and those that follow it and live in it; and though some may say, That to withdraw and depart from that which they have sometimes observed in outward practice, is not to withdraw or depart from the Truth, but rather a growth, and a going forward in it; but that will not hold to be true if tried by the Truth it self; and for want of such a trial many have wronged themselves: for if there had been a true trial, before there had been

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such a close joyning, the matter would have appeared otherwise, and the deceiveableness would have been seen under the covering, and all that walked in the Light did see it, and were preserved; for Truth is unchangeable in all its wayes, though in degrees it appears more glorious, and being an immutable unalterable power, it alwayes justifies its own work and order from one degree to another; and they that really go forward in the Truth, and retain it in their particulars to wait upon God, they cannot possibly disesteem or dispise any practise which in the Truth is observed, and in and by which they have often been refreshed; (for mark) *Where the carkass is, thither will the Eagles resort*; and this in the beginning did draw to meet together with a willing mind; for as the Word of Life was ministred by such as God appointed, so the vertue of it caused resort unto it, and the same thing being yet preserved and continued, and also much increased, according to the power and wisdom in which it did begin, how can any lay a sufficient ground for their withdrawing or departing from it? or how can any truly say, that they are gone forward in the Truth, or that they retain a measure of it to wait upon God in their own particulars? for the Everlasting power of the Lord God doth yet continue amongst those that fear him, and the Word of Life floweth, and is yet ministred in the Assemblies of the Righteous, and all the faithfull meeteth with it in a large and plentiful measure; and it yeildeth the same vertue unto refreshment & nourishment as in the beginning, and keepeth the same judgment upon Transgressors; and hereby it is manifest, that the Power changes not, nor the Word of Life ceaseth not, but some are rather willing to cease from obeying the Truth, and to depart from the holy Commandment given of God, and so it had been better they had never known it, unless they repent and return, but such things are permitted to happen, that they which are reproved may be made manifest, and that the Lord may be magnified in stretching forth his Arm for the recovery of such who in their simplicity have been turned aside: and though some may think that they are gotten above the Assemblies of the Righteous, and the ministration of the power (which is the Gospel) and that they are now more large and universal in their love, yet that power which they dispise, as a thing below them, will bruise the head of that spirit which hath lift them up, and all that abide in that power will live the longer life, and the love

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which is in the Light where the Righteous have their fellowship, is will remain when all the pretended universal love is gone; for the love which is universal is in God, and that love is pure, and cannot joyn to any impure thing, to have unity or fellowship with it; for if it were so, then there is no distinction between righteousness and unrighteousness; but there is a distinction, for as much as righteousness is always justified, and unrighteousness alwayes condemned, and so it is as possible to joyn the East and West together, as to joyn righteousness and unrighteousness in unity and fellowship, and who walks in the Light in which is the universal Love of God, they cannot have fellowship with the unfruitfull works of darkness, but is made to reprove them; and so the Light is the same now as in the Apostles dayes, and they that live in it are of the same mind as they were, and they could not have fellowship with unfruitfull works of darkness, but reproved them; and the Apostles were in the universal Love of God, and God never loved *Esau*: therefore all such had need consider what they are gone from, and what they are joyned unto, lest they so long withstand the Lord until the day of visitation pass over; for it is certain that all such as have forsaken the Assemblies of the Righteous, and disesteemes, or rather, dispises the ministration of the Gospel, that they have filled themselves with high imaginations, & surfets with their own fulness, and so they loath the Life and Vertue which is sweeter then the hony comb, and with their own fulness they grow wanton, and makes themselves merry above the Witness, and so with the flesh are committing whoredom and uncleanness; but that which is begotten in an unlawfull bed must not inherit the Kingdom of God, that birth is not the Heir of Life, nor cannot have an inheritance with the Saints in Light; (mark) it is the Saints in Light which inherits, it is their lot only which falleth into that grounc, and there is none can partake of their goodly heritage, but who are born of the same Life; for those that are full and wonton, and in their fulness and wontonness joyns to a harlot, they have no part in the Kingdom of God and of Christ; but as they sow to the flesh, so of the flesh they must reap corruption; and this is a grief unto the righteous, that any who had a beginning in the Light and Spirit should go back again into the flesh, and in that state to think they are perfect, and that their perfection is of a higher degree then those who keeps in the

the Light and Spirit where they did begin; for that measure of Light and Spirit which was first manifest from God to spread abroad his Truth in this day, it was and is perfect, it was, and is his good and perfect gift, it came from him as from the Father of Light, with whom is no variableness or shaddow of turning; then that which is variable and turning, is not the gift of God, and they that are varied and turned from the Assemblies of the righteous, and from the Ministration of the Gospel, they are gone from the gift of God that is perfect, and the highest degree of their perfection is perfect surmisings, and perfect prejudice, and perfect enmity, and this state will never stand as a perfect state before the Lord; and it is with such, as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth; but when he awaketh his soul is empty; and this is the greatest deceiveableness in the highest mystery of iniquity, for to be deceived in spiritual things as to the immortal Soul, is the greatest deceiveableness, and all from the Light which is the good and perfect gift of God are so deceived; for as they are from the Light, they are in darkness, and in darkness they sleep and dream; for they that sleep, sleep in the night, and in their sleeping and dreaming, it is, as if they were eating, [but mark] when they awaken their Souls are empty; and so all that goes from the Light and Life, and falls asleep and dreameth, they are deceived with their dreams; and by such a dreaming vision many simple ones have been deceived; and all that are turned aside from the Way of Life, and are departed from the Assemblies of the upright in heart, they are all deceived by a vision which had its beginning in sleeping and dreaming, and all the perfection that is in it, is but as a vapour that flyeth in the Air, and the Souls of such are empty who have received the vision, and are sleeping and dreaming in it: therefore all to be awakened who are sleeping and dreaming in the night, and turn to the Light and Day which they have dispised, that they may come to see that their Souls are empty, whilst they are surfiting with their own fulness, & so come to be undeceived by the manifestation of the Everlasting Truth, and be recovered out of the Snare in which they are taken, and it is only the consideration of the Soul, and love unto it, that presseth to the manifestation of these dangers, and also to the manifestation of Truth, that such as are fallen into them may not always be entangled with them, but come to the Light and Spirit again in which they did begin, that by the

Light,

Light, Spirit & Power of the Lord God, their Captivity may return; for *Jacob* is in mourning, and *Israel* in heavineſs whilſt the Captivity remains, and the Lamb is ſlain, though pretended to be followed, and the Lord of Life is crucified; and the univerſal Love of God is ſtraitned, & this is not a ſtate wherein *Jacob* can rejoyce and *Iſrael* be glad, but that which in this ſtate rejoyces and is glad, it is appointed for heavineſs, and a day of ſorrow; oh that there might not be a reſiſter of the Power of God, or a withſtander of his Arm, by which he doth valiant things; for that ſpirit which hath drawn from the Way of Truth, and hath brought in ſurmiſings, prejudice and enmity, it muſt come under the power of the Lord to be judged & condemned; & who have any tenderneſs remains in their hearts towards God, or any ſimple love to his Truth and People, let all give up that ſpirit to be judged, as their greateſt enemy, and not to run in that ſpirit from the Judgment Seat, for then it will fall heavy upon them in the latter end, and the Lord will be clear in that he hath waited to be gracious, and hath not ceaſed to viſit by many faithful Warnings; for though the night viſion did create, and bring forth a manifeſt oppoſition to the Truth and Power of God, yet the Truth and Power of God ſpreads abroad and proſpers, and all the Whirlwinds paſſeth away, and the Children of Light yet lives in the ſtill and quiet day, and the Lord blo wsupon that ſpirit which blows againſt his Truth, and it is going into its air, and all that it carrieth up with it will be driven about as clouds of darkneſs; but the Righteous rejoyces, and are glad in the Lord, for their Foundation ſtandeth ſure, and their Building unſhaken; and it is the ſame Foundation upon which they now ſtand, as in the beginning, it is unalterably ſo, and the Lord is with them as in the beginning, and they love his Word as in the beginning, and have unity and fellowſhip in the Light, as in the beginning, and that which was in the beginning is their food and cloathing, and they ſhine in the glory of righteouſneſs which is their Garment, and ſo they have kept the beginning, and proſpers in that which was in the beginning, which is the ſame to day and for ever, and there is no end of its goodneſs; and they that are gone away, as if God was departed from the Aſſemblies of the Righteous, they are departed from God in themſelves, and ſo have loſt the ſence and feeling of him in that way by which he appeareth with the Faithful, for his Power and Glory is more abundantly ſeen in the Aſſemblies of his People,

and they that cannot see him and find him there, it is they that are departed from God, but God is not departed from those that love him and worships him; and that is their joy and Crown of rejoycing, that they are counted worthy to serve the Lord, and to feel his Presence; and notwithstanding there hath appeared great oppositions, not only in a way of outward Persecution, but also in several other ways and manners, and sometimes from such as once in measure had received Truth, and made a profession of it, yet the Lord hath carried on his own work, and Truth hath prospered from the beginning, by which it is manifest that God is not departed, but is the same unto all and with all that wait upon him; for there could be no prosperity if God was departed, but there is prosperity, yea, a great increase, and many tender Plants are springing and budding, and many are grown to be Trees of Righteousness, of the Lords planting, and in the strength of the Lord they stand as Pillars in his House, and there is no decay nor want in the Family, all the Garners are rich with store, and their Land is a Land of plenty; and all that are departed out of the House are gone into Famine, and are decayed as Branches that wanteth nourishment from the Root; and herein the great and universal love of God is manifest to his People, who hath caused his Light to shine in their hearts, and also drawn their hearts to joyn unto it, so that it is become the most precious thing by them to be defired; and as they have been faithfull to it from the beginning, so it still remaineth with them, and spreads abroad its power more fully and largly; and though some might be drawn away in the beginning who were convinced, and felt the power, yet as their hearts are joyned to it again, they are come into prosperity, for the Lord hath caused their Captivity to return, and Captivity being returned, the pure Plant increases with the increase of God, and that is the increase in which is prosperity, all being gathered into the Light and Power of God, they are all fruitful Branches of a Living Root; and so all that obey the Light are united in one, and every one in their measure grows in Grace and Godliness, and in that all stands in the beginning; and as they wait upon God in that which first convinced them, they are preserved out of the Net of the Fowler, and from the deceit of the Deceiver; and this is marvellous in the eyes of many this day; for by the preservation that many have witnessed, by cleaving to the Power, they certainly

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know that there is not another thing sufficient for that work; and so they keep their faith in it, as in the greatest; and in the very time when darkness came upon some to draw them back, then there was no whither else for them to go, but to that which from the beginning had preserved; for they were come to assurance that he was the Son of God in whom they believed, and they knew that he had the word of Eternal Life; and so they could not forsake him, and depart from him, to go to another, but continued in his love according to his Command; which, if all had done so, there had not been a going away and departing; but the Serpent beguiled, as he beguiled *Eve*; and though he aimed to deceive the very Elect, yet it was not possible, because their Foundation was sure, and they were faithfull to it; and upon the Foundation they yet stand, and are not moved, and the Truth is precious in their eye, and the testimony of it lovely in their hearts, and they are not weary of serving the Lord, for his power carries them as upon Eagles Wings, and such are not born of flesh and blood, and of the will of man, but of God, and as Heirs of God they inherit Life and Immortality; and so they rejoyce in their way, and in their portion, and in this good ground their lot is fallen, and they have a goodly heritage, yea a heritage above the Earth, and the glory of it; for in the Seed and Life they have found the heavenly Treasure, and the Pearl of great price; and as their affections are set upon things above, so they do not mind to be in love with things below; and abiding in the Light and Truth, they have a sure Dwelling, and a quiet Habitation; and so in that which is immortal they live with the Lord, and one another, and are refreshed in the Lord and one in another; and these are Children which of his own Will he hath begotten by the Word of his Power, [mark] by the Word of his Power these are begotten, and they love the Word of his Power which hath begotten them, and it is Milk unto them as Babes, and Meat as strong Men, and they know the vertue and power of it, and cannot depart from it, and by faith in the power they obtain victory, and so they keep the faith, and do not make shipwrack of it, and by faith they stand, and from the beginning they have kept in the way that is good, and have not cunningly devised Fables, but by the manifestation of Truth have approved themselves unto God; and these are they which of his own Will he hath begotten by the Word of his Power, who love

the Word of his Power that hath begotten them, and by the Word of his Power he upholds them; it is that they lean upon, and cleave unto in all their trials, distress and tribulations, and it hath been, and is their strength from one degree of godliness unto another, and from one degree of faith to another; and so from degree to degree they have followed the Lord in humbleness of mind, and he hath and doth give his Grace unto them, and exalts them into honour, and they are honourable and beloved in his sight; and though some that came out with them be gone from them, yet the Truth is the same, and they are the same in the Truth; for as they have kept in the Truth from the beginning, so they have not wavered nor changed, but in all things have been found faithfull wherein Truth hath been concerned, and many whose dear and precious lives have been given up as a Testimony to it, and many whose sufferings and tribulations doth yet remain for the Truth sake; and it is no less in such as now depart from the testimony, and turns against it, then a trampling upon the Blood and Sufferings of the Faithfull, and so a trampling under foot the Son of God, and doing dispite to the Spirit of Grace, and such are gone from the Grace of God in themselves, and so runs into the liberty that pleaseth the vain mind which cannot bear the yoke; and in that Sea of liberty in vanity the flesh is pleased, and from that Sea cometh all the great swelling words of vanity in the likeness of Truth; but the Sea is bounded, beyond which it cannot pass, and in that which bounds the troubled Seas the faithfull are preserved from being swallowed up; and they that are fallen into this Ocean, they are fallen from the Rock (Christ Jesus) who is the beginning and ending, the first and last; and so they are gone from the chief corner stone the Elect and precious, upon which the Building is fitly framed, and groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord (so mark) the Building is fitly framed upon the Rock, and not upon the Sea; and upon the Rock the Building standeth and groweth unto an holy Temple; and so the Power of the Rock raiseth the Building which is framed upon it, and there is a perfect union between the Foundation and Building, and a perfect union in the Building; for it is framed and compacted by his hand who is Lord of all, so it is united, and no where out of order; for that which is out of order is not framed and compacted in the Building which stands upon the Rock; and though it may appear as

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framed, compacted and builded, yet it is not united to the Foundation: but the Lord hath pleasure in his own Building; as being his own work, and it grows to be an holy Temple, and he fills it with his Presence and Glory; and besides this Foundation which God hath laid, there in no man can lay another, nor no man can build another Building to be an holy Temple for him; therefore all foundations and buildings which man hath layed and builded must come to nought, for it is only his own Work that must stand and remain; and so he hath been building upon his own Foundation, and he hath framed a Building according unto his pleasure, and he causeth the Building to grow unto an holy Temple for himself to walk in; and so he walks in the Temple, and dwells in the Temple which is holy, and this is his own Work from the beginning.

For when the Lord appeared to make known his Truth, in this day there was no building framed, but all in several Forms and Professions scattered, and he beheld it, and his eye pitied, and then was his Love manifest to the scattered, and with his Light he opened their eye that was darkned, and many came to see that their foundation was sandy, and that their building could not stand safely; and as the Lord was minded in this Morning of Light, or springing of his Day, so more Light brake forth from his fulness, and the day more appeared, and dangers came to be more clearly seen; and when dangers were discerned in the Light, there was a fear came upon many to behold them; for as they saw their foundation to be sandy, so they came to be sensible that it would fail, and their building fall, and that they could not stand in safety, if they did there remain, and in the sence of their danger they were made to cease from building, and to cry unto the Lord for help; for they came to see with the Light that was breaking forth, that the Lord would overturn their foundation and building: and though some had long been working & building, yet they were made willing to give it all up, and to become nothing as to what they had done, and being mindful of the Light which had opened their eye, and made them sensible of their danger, and waiting in fear and humbleness of mind, the Lord revealeth a sure Foundation of his own laying, and he called the scattered to come into it; and as his voice was obeyed he stretched forth his Arm and gathered, and with the strength of his Love he made many willing to be at his disposing; and then he began to work upon their hearts by his Power, and

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to frame their hearts according to the nature of his own Foundation, for all were out of order until the Lord began to work by his mighty power, there was not one ſtone framed fit for his Building, but all were rough and could not be layed and compacted together; and in this condition the Lord found the children of men in this day of his appearance, he did not find them framed, and ſo fit for building; but he found them as ſuch upon whom the Plain had not gone, and for his Name ſake he took the work into his own Hand, and his work reached to the heart which was out of order; and then many came to feel the Lord working in them by his power, and came to know that it was the Lord, which they never knew before; and as they came to know God by the work of his Power in their hearts, ſo they came to ſtand in fear before him, and not kowing what the Lord would do by ſuch a manifeſtation and operation of his Light and Power, they were brought to ſtand ſtill in ſilence and to wait for the effect, and then did he open the Treaſures of his Love and ſhewed them his Salvation, and alſo ſhewed them his Judgment ſeat before which they were to ſtand, and they were made willing to appear before him, and to be judged by him; and he cauſed his Judgment to paſs thorow them for the caſting out of that ſpirit which wrought iniquity, and for the killing of that life which had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs, and ſo his Judgments were found to be juſt, and he was found to be righteous, for he judged nothing but that which was contrary to the purity of his own Life, and was the burthen of the immortal Soul, and that is for judgment in all where ever it remains; and ſo he began and proſpered his work in the hearts of thoſe that did abide the day of his coming, and they can ſet to their ſeal that God is true; and whilſt the wicked ſtood in his ſight he was terrible in his appearance, and whilſt corruption remained he was dreadful to behold, for his Word was as a Fire and a Hammer upon the tranſgreſſing nature, and ſo his Fame hath gone, and his Hammer hath wrought for the purging of the conſcience from dead works, and for the raiſing and bringing forth of life and immortality, and ſo by his Power he hath ſquared and framed the hearts of many, and hath made them fit for his building, and he hath fixed and united them to his foundation (which is Chriſt the Rock) and in him he hath fixed and united them one to another, and ſo the building and foundation are joyned in one nature, and the building is fitly framed and grows unto an

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holy Temple, it doth not decay and fall, but grows and prospers in the Light, Life and Power, and since the beginning the Lord hath enlarged it more abundantly, and hath raised it into honour and glory, and herein his works hath been seen from the beginning by all that have kept in the beginning, whose eye have been to the Lord in that by which he first made himself known unto them; and this is the foundation and building that standeth, and will stand as being only the Lords; for man hath been wholly excluded from the work, that the excellency of the Power might appear to be of God, and that he alone might have the glory in it, and by it; and so it is not the Wise, nor Mighty, nor Prudent of the world that brought to pass the things which now are witnessed by the Righteous, but the Arm of the Lord hath done it, and his Power is exalted in it, and by it, and his Power triumpheth over all contrary spirits that would lay his building waste; & many can now say as in times past, We are God's Husbandry, we are God's Building, the Seed which is sprung up is of God, and the Building is framed by him, and he waters his Seed, and bears up the Pillars of his Building, and therefore his Seed and Building grows and prospers and triumphs in Victory, and here the goings on with the Lord is known from the beginning, for he hath led many by the hand, and carried many in his Bosom, and such have been with him from the beginning, they have not run out of either hand, or turned back again, but have kept their Habitation in the holy Temple which the Lord buildeth, and where his Honor dwelleth, and so have always walked with the Lord, and the Lord with them: but who are departed from the ministry of the Word of Life, or utter words, and not in the Life, they are not alwayes with the Lord, nor the Lord with them; and so they are to mind the Light to be their stay, and to stay their minds upon God, and keep to the Truth as the Principle which instructeth in the right way, that Life and Vertue may spring, and Unity and Followship grow and increase; for all that have kept to the Truth, as the Principle, they have been preserved by the Power of it, and have escaped many dangers which others have fallen into for want of Watchfulness, for he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not, he keeps himself in the Power by which he is begotten, and into that Power the wicked One cannot come to touch him; and so the begotten of God is kept from the Wicked One by the Power,

Power which begets him, and by the Power is alwayes helped in the needful time, and here the Righteous dwell safely under the Banner which is spread over them, they do not depart from the Testimony of the Word of Life, neither do they utter words as a Testimony out of the Life, but lives and dwells in the Life as in their Habitation, and they that do not dwell in this Habitation they utter words from a wrong motion, but who keeps their Habitation in the Life, the Life is in their Ministry and Testimony, for such lives in the Word of Life, and so preaches the Word of Life in its own power, and the sound of that Word of Life and Power goes thorow death and darkness and reaches the true and faithful Witness, and this is a joyful sound by which the Captive is made glad, and this sound is gone forth into the World, and the words of it to the ends of the Earth, & many that were in the Graves are raised up by it; the dead hath heard the voice of the Son of God and lives, for it hath quickned and given Life to as many as received the Testimony of it into their hearts, and they that keeps it, and abids in it, they live by it, and such cannot forget it, nor the benefits they have received by it; but esteemes it and prefers it above all other things; and so they do not let the benefits slip out of their minds, but retains them in that from which they have received them, and so they keep in the beginning, and goes forward in the beginning, for it clearly manifesteth that such as depart from the Way of Truth, and from the holy Commandement given of God, that they have not kept in the beginning, but lost it, and so have lost the sence of benefits which in the beginning they received, and now makes merry above the Witness, and grows wanton upon the Earth, and what can the end of these things be but distress, sorrow and misery, for all that have known the Lord in any measure, and have turned their backs upon him, they cannot lie down in peace, except they repent, and therefore that all might mind their own conditions, and not to resist and strive against that which seeks their eternal good, but submit unto it with a lowly and humble mind, that the vapours which darkens their understanding may be removed, and the night vision cease, and the Word of Life become precious to them as in the beginning; for the Lord hath gathered a Flock which keeps together in his Light, Life, Power and Wisdom, and he is their Shepherd and Bishop of their Souls; and as they abide with him,

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they cannot be scatter'd any more, for the good Shepherd leads them, and keeps them, and the Bishop of their Souls oversees them, and takes care for them; and the Pasture of his Life is their delight and well-being; and so the Lord God exalts his everlasting Truth over all, and his Work prospers against every assault that would lay it waste, and in the pure Truth springs and spreads and triumphs, and the Lamb and the Saints have the Victory, and must have the Victory, and the Victory they rejoyce and are exceeding glad, for they know that their labour is not in vain in the Lord, and by many infallible proofs the Lord doth evidence that they are his, and that the labour of true Labourers doth stand in his Councel and Wisdom; and the Lord God is a Witness for them that they labour in his Service, for as much as he makes them useful both to the gathering and confirming many; and having such a certain evidence of the Lords Power with them, they minde their Labour and service, and though some, which in the beginning was the fruit of their Labour, be gone from that in which they then received their Testimony, and now reckons their Labour and Service to be useless, yet the Lord reckons their Labour and Service useful for himself, and many that stands as the seal of their Apostleship and Ministry; and having the seal they continue their Labor in the work of God, and cannot cease to publish the everlasting Gospel; but goeth on with the Lord, and the Lord with them, and they are a blessing in his Hand for converting sinners from their way, and for establishing the righteous in their goings; and whosoever rises up to oppose the work of the Lord in the Gospel ministration, they must certainly fall and wither as the mown grass; for the good Seed is sown, and many have received it into the ground, and fruit is brought forth according to increase, and the Lord God hath his honour and glory by it, and this is the sweet savour which proceedeth from the Almighty to season the Earth; for the Earth hath brought forth corruptible fruit, which is unsavoury, and now the Lord God is seasoning the Earth with the savour of his Life, and the Testimony of Life spreads abroad, that the Earth may be seasoned; and the Everlasting Gospel is preached over the Beast, and the Whore, and false Prophet, and many have received it into their hearts, and walks according to the Truth of it, and because of the good savour they are in love with it; and so the Truth and Power of the Lord God judges down, and goes

over the head of the Serpent, and the Lamb reigns, and must reign, and under his Government the Saints rejoyces.

A short Testimony unto Gospel Meetings and Fellowship, &c.

THe Everlasting God having called and separated a people by the manifestation of his Light, Spirit and Power from the ways, customs and worships which are observed amongst such as be in the Fall and in the Apostacy, he hath gathered them into a new and living Way, and into a holy and spiritual Worship, and in the leadings of his Spirit they follow him according to his Mind and Will, and in his Wisdom and Counsel he orders them to meet together, and to wait upon him in his fear, not in the way, nor after the manner as others do who know not his Mind and Will in what they do, but as a distinct and separated people from all that meet according to the commandment of men, they meet according to the Commandment of God; and this is a meeting according to the Truth of the Gospel, for the Saints in Primitive times did not meet to wait upon God, and worship him amongst the Jews in their Synagogues and Temple, but by the Light and Spirit were separated from their Worship, and in the Light and Spirit they met together in such places, and at such times as the Lord ordered and appointed; and they met distinctly and apart both from the Jews and Gentiles in their way and worship, and did not meet or joyn with them to observe their practise, as may be seen in the Scriptures of Truth, *for when Christ ascended he commanded his Disciples to tarry at* Jerusalem *until they were indued with Power from on high* (so mark) he commanded that they should tarry at *Jerusalem*, and meet together, and wait for the Power to endue them, *and being met together with one accord in one place* (mark again) being met together, there was a Gospel meeting according to the Commandement of the Lord, *And in that meeting the holy Ghost fell upon them, and they spake as the Spirit gave them utterance*, (mark again) they did not go forth before they had received the Power, nor they did not speak before the Spirit gave them utterance, but having received the Spirit and Power they then speak in the Spirit, and went forth to declare the things of God in his Power, and in the Spirit and Power which they had received they gathered Meetings distinctly both from Jews and Gentiles, and they continue their Meetings, and did not cease to meet after they had

had received the Spirit and Power, and they were not only separated from the Jews and Gentiles as to their worship, but they also received power to testifie against the worships which Jews & Gentiles observed: for *Stephen* testified against the Temple-worship, and *Paul* against the *Athenians* Worship, and this was their love to God his Truth and Worship, and also love to the Souls of such as were ignorantly worshipping; and herein they discharged a good Conscience towards God, forasmuch as they labored to open the understandings of ignorant Worshippers, by testifying against their Worships; and as they met together and worshipped God in his Spirit and Truth, so they kept their Meetings in his fear, and did not forsake the assembling of themselves, but with all diligence observed the Way and Order of the Spirit which they had received of God to meet together, and to worship God in; and their Meetings were formed and ordered of the Lord, and by his appointment; they were not formed, ordered or appointed of man, or by man, but the Hand of the Lord was in the forming, ordering and appointing of them; and they that sometimes observed them, and then departed from them, they departed from the holy Commandment given of God; and so is doth clearly appear that the Meetings of the holy People (called *Quakers*) are constituted, ordained and commanded of God, forasmuch as they answer to the Saints Meetings in primitive times, being formed and appointed of God, as their Meetings were, and being also observed in the same Light, Spirit, Life and Power; and so their Meetings are no new thing, if truly examined and compared with the purity of Gospel times; but their Meetings are of the first constitution and appointment of God amongst Christians, and so hath the first place in Christian Practice, Service and Worship; for as they stand by the Appointment & Commandment of God, so they are more worthy to be observed then any Meetings that stand by the appointment and commandment of men; and all that truly love God they do observe them as his Command, and by keeping his Command they manifest that they love him; and many that doth manifest their love unto God in assembling and meeting together according to his Appointment and Command, and his Command is not grievous, but joyous unto them; for by observing and keeping his Command, they have found him in his own Way, and so keep their Meetings unto God, and not unto men, and this is the

glorious Light that is broken forth again through the Night of Apostasy, and in which Gospel-meetings are ordered again, as was before the Apostacy, and the Everlasting Gospel is preached again as in the Apostles dayes, and Christianity is known again as was amongst them, and the worship of God is observed again in their Light, Life and Spirit, and the Way of Life and Peace is walked in, as was by them; and so all things are made new by the appearance of Christ, in his Light and Power, and yet nothing new in it self, as to the ground, but only made new by a separation and distinction from the old: for all that man hath constituted, ordained and set up, as to Worship and Religion, it is of the old nature, and so old things, but Christ makes all things new, and yet in himself before all things, and he hath brought forth that again which Darkness hath overspread since the primitive times, which being so large a time kept under darkness, it now appeareth new, distinctly from the old; and though this be new as to the appearance of it out of the old; yet Christ, who brings it forth in himself, he is the beginning of all; and so he is the first and good Old Way, as in relation to foregoing Ages; and also the last, and new and Living Way, in relation to succeeding Ages; and he hath gathered a people to himself, who walks with him, as in the new and living Way, and in him they meet and worship God, and enjoys his Presence; and having found the Lord in his own Way, & walking with the Lord in his own Leading, they cannot walk in any other way, nor meet to worship God in any other manner, for there is but one way that leadeth unto God, and in which he is worshipped, and that is Christ the Light, & Truth and Life, and that way being found, all other ways are to be denied as leading from God, & that is the ground why such as have found the new and Living Way, and walk in it, cannot walk in the old and dead wayes, which by the old nature of men are set up and prescribed, but cleaveth to the Way which God hath prepared and appointed, that they should walk in; and therefore the holy People (called *Quakers*) who walk in the Light and Spirit cannot walk in the wayes, nor observe the worships in any Form or Profession which is made and set up by men, as knowing that Christ Jesus is not their way, nor that their worship is constituted and ordained of God; and therefore they cannot meet with them, nor walk with them, nor worship with them; but meets in the Spirit, and walks

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in the Spirit, and worships God in the Spirit, who is a Spirit; and this is a Gospel-Meeting, and Way, and Worship as in the Primitive times, and all other meetings, wayes and worships are constituted and set up since the primitive times, and they are all to be denied and forsaken, as having no life in them; for though the Lord might once appear in Meetings, Wayes and Worships which were of a lower degree then that which now he hath revealed, and that the tender in heart did meet with something of God in such Meetings, Wayes and Worships; yet that doth not bind the Lord to a continuance in such meetings, wayes and worships; neither is it a sufficient ground for any to continue in them now the Lord hath appeared in a higher and greater Manifestation of Light; for what any have met withal as from the Lord in lower Dispensations, it was for the drawing and bringing them higher; not that God would fix himself in that dispensation, or fix any unto it, but only condescended unto low things to bring forward into higher, and so to lead on from that which is below into that which is above, and so to the greatest, which is Christ the fulness, who in the appearance of his Light and Life doth swallow up all lower Dispensations, though as to time they might be of God; and so many have seen the goings on of the Lord in his Light, and in his Light have followed him, from the lower into the higher; and so are come to live and walk in that where his Presence remains; and to as many as have so followed him, and abides with him, they know the place of his Rest, and also knows their rest in him; and so they know the Lord to live in them, and walk in them, and that he is their God, and they are his people; and in such a Meeting, Way and Worship the Lord is found, and he abides and continues there in his Love, Mercy and Goodness, therefore all below are to come up into it; and all gone from it are to return, if they would walk with the Lord; for there is not another way wherein any doth walk with the Lord, or the Lord with them, but in his Light, Life and Power, and in that to meet and worship him according to his own Appointment and Command; for as the Lord is gathering into himself all lower Dispensations, and gathering in one such as have been scattered in them; so all are to mind the Lords gathering, that in the Light, by which he gathereth, they may come to be made perfect in one, [mark] in one is the perfection, which is Christ the Light, and

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Life, and Power and Wisdom of God, in whose Light, Life, Power and Wisdom is the Gospel unity and Fellowship, not in outward Forms and Professions, and inner Dispensations, but in the Light, and Life of Christ Jesus, who is above all, and greatest then all; in his Light the Saints had Fellowship, as the Scriptures testifie, and in his Light the Saints have Fellowship in this day; and so by one Spirit they are all baptized into one Body, and are one Body under the Government of Christ the head; and this is the universal fellowship in the universal Light, where the Spirits of just men, are now known who are gone before, and the Spirits of just men now will be known by such as are to come; and so a perfect unity in perfect Light of Christ, by which Light the faithfull are bound in a bundle of Life, and so in the unity of the Light and Spirit the Saints now meets and worships God, and build up one another in their most holy Faith, and edifies and comforts one another according to the practise of the holy men and women in times past, and they keep the unity of the Spirit which unto them is the bond of Peace; and though some may lose the unity by going from the Spirit, and some that may profess the Truth be not in unity, as not walking in the Spirit, yet neither doth weaken or break the unity of such as lives and abides in the Spirit, for the Spirit changes not, though some that profess the Truth do not walk in it, or some may withdraw and depart from it, therefore the unity in the Spirit is certain and everlasting, and it is the bond of Peace to all that live in it.

So all are to come unto this Light and Spirit in which the Saints meet and worship God, and in which they have unity and fellowship with God and one another, there is nothing below it will endure, nor nothing exalted above that will stand; for as the Light and Spirit is the beginning, so it is the ending unto all that abides in it; for all truth is only comprehended in the Light and Spirit of God, and from thence received, and there is not any other things, or things, in which true and lasting peace can be found, but in a measure of that Light which comes from God as the Fountain, & they that have fixed themselves below the Light, they must be dis-joyned from that unto which they are fixed, and stand loose from all things which they have made and set up in Worship and Religion, and mind the Light which is only true, to lead them forward into all truth, for where any are fixed to things below the Light, and will not be dis-joyned and

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seperated from them by the Light, they are covered in mortality, as the corruptible body which presseth down the Soul; and whatsoever any may pretend as to their Meetings, Wayes and Worshipps to be of God, yet they are all formed and framed in the corruptible part, and so are all corruptible offerings, which have not the Savour of incorruptible Virtue, therefore all Forms and Professions distinct from the Light, with all their Meetings, Worships and Worshippers, they must all forsake their Meetings, as being in the corruptible part, and as such where the living God is not to be found, and all come to the Light and Spirit of God which openeth the eye and understanding, and gives the knowledge of God and of his Way and Truth, all to come unto that, and follow it, and live in it, and so come to the Assemblies of the Righteous, and to the Meetings of the Firstborn of God, and with them to worship God in his Spirit and Truth, and to have unity and fellowship with them in the Light which is their Guide and Way, and so come to keep the holy Commandment given of God, for until the holy Commandement of the Lord God be kept the mind remains in sin and transgression, and there is none in that state which are in the Saints Worship and Fellowship, and so they must come to the Light to be redeemed from the vanity of their minds, because the Pure and Holy God is not worshipped with such a mind; therefore the Light must be followed as a Leader to bring out of vanity into Truth and Purity, and so to Serve and Worship the Pure and Holy God with a pure and holy mind, and with a sincere and upright heart, and unto this all must come before their service and worship be accepted of God, or before they can come to have true and lasting peace with him; therefore let the wicked forsake their way and the unrighteous their thoughts, and turn to the Lord who would not the death of them that dye; and so come out of all Forms and Professions below the Light and Life, and come to the Light, and meet with those that meet in the Light, and worship God in Spirit & Truth, and so come to keep the Ordinance of God, and who are willing to come in the drawings and leadings of the Light and Spirit, the Lord standeth ready to receive them, and will in no wise cast them off as being yet the day of his Visitation: Oh, therefore, let all come whilst the hand of the Lord is stretched forth to gather them, and whilst his Arm is open to receive them, let them come in the Light and in the Spirit, and bow before the Lord, and worship in his holy Temple, that all who are drinking the cup of

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Formation, may come to the cup of Salvation, and praise the Lord.

And all that have been formerly convinced of the everlasting Truth, and for a time assembled with the holy Congregations, and kept the holy Commandments given of God, and now have lost their Guide and Way, and forsaken the Assemblies of Gods chosen, and departed from the holy Commandment, and from the worship and ordinance of God, and are gotten into created likenesses, and are bowing and worshipping at their own Altar, that they all may feel that again which first convinced them, from which they are gone, that by its Power, it may cause them to return, and so in the Light and pure Spirit to come again to the worship and ordinance of God; that as they have departed from the ordinance of God, and broken the Covenant, and gone from the true fellowship, so to return unto that again from which they are departed and gone; and to return in submission and lowliness of mind, and tenderness of heart, that the Lord and his people may delight to receive them, and may have pleasure in them. Oh let all return from the barren Mountains and broken Cisterns, and return to the Lord whom they have grieved by departing from him, and let them return to that which reconcileth and maketh peace, that they may not wholly lose the benefit of former mercies, nor the benefit of present and future Mercies, but return to the Light, and live in it, where mercies alwayes aboundeth, that as there was a beginning in the Truth of the Gospel; so to return unto that which in the beginning did lead in the Gospel Way and Practise, and so return to the Gospel Meetings, and to the Gospel Ministration, and to the Gospel Fellowship, and this whilst it is to day, and whilst the dore is open, and whilst the Lord and his people are willing and ready to receive, let it bear a weight upon every heart concerned, for as much as everlasting peace and happiness consisteth in it. Oh wander not longer in desert places, nor feed no longer upon corruptible thing, but feel the Seed, and Life and Vertue, and with the Power of the Lord God judg down that spirit which is gotten up, that the first-born which is gone into captivity may shew it self again, and the Truth and order of the Gospel may be lived in again, and the Ordinance of God kept again, and Gospel fellowship come into again, that all who are departed may return and find rest for their Soul.

Nottingham, 9th Month, 1668. W. S.

THE END.